

Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton lawyers [Jim Thompson](#) and [Matt Minner](#) to represent family in natural gas pipeline explosion.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (December 21, 2007) – The family of fatally injured Corbin Fawcett, 47, of Haleyville, Ala., hired the Birmingham-based law firm of Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton, LLP, today to represent them in a lawsuit they intend to file against Houston-based Columbia Gulf Transmissions, a subsidiary of energy company NiSource, Inc. Mr. Fawcett was killed on Friday, Dec. 14, at 1 p.m. as a result of a northeast Louisiana gas pipeline explosion that occurred while he drove his 1985 Chevrolet pickup eastbound on Interstate 20 near Delhi, La. The defendant, Columbia Gulf Transmission, is the owner of 4,200 miles of pipeline that stretches across Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky, and connects every major pipeline system on the Gulf.

“Our condolences are extended to all of the family and friends of Mr. Fawcett,” Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton Senior Partner James J. Thompson, Jr., said as he and attorney Matt Minner made the announcement of the planned lawsuit. “This tragedy is especially heightened for all involved due to the holiday season. We are disappointed in the public breach of trust that Columbia Gulf Transmissions has exhibited through their failure to act in a responsible manner in maintaining the upkeep of their pipeline.”

Attorney Tony Glenn, a partner in the Glenn & Hensley Law Firm of Hamilton, Ala. will assist Thompson and Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton Attorney Matt Minner with the case.

The blast happened when a 30-inch, steel underground pipe, a part of the Columbia Gulf pipeline that carries natural gas to the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast

United States, exploded under them as Fawcett and his passenger traveled a U.S. highway. The interstate erupted in flames, killing Fawcett and injuring his passenger. The explosion stopped traffic on north Louisiana and central Mississippi's major east-west corridor, Interstate 20, for more than five hours. Corrosion of external metals on the pipeline, located about 50 yards from interstate traffic, is the suspected cause of the explosion. The pipe ruptured near a small bridge that carries Interstate 20 at the Richland-Madison Parish Line.

“No amount of money, no matter how large, will ever come close to compensating this family for the inconceivable loss they suffered from Mr. Fawcett's death,” Thompson added.

“Mr. Fawcett's widow, Robin, and his children want to ensure that no other family suffers such a senseless and tragic loss,” said Minner. “This family takes some solace in recognizing that their loss may have a positive impact for the safety of future motorists. By filing a lawsuit the family is reiterating the role safety must play among corporate giants.

“This pipeline was installed in 1954 – more than 50 years ago – so one must consider whether or not it is a public hazard after all these years,” Minner said. “It is our intent to fully investigate the cause of this death and ensure that Columbia Gulf and NiSource accept their corporate responsibility to this family and to the general public.”

Mr. Fawcett was the owner of Thunder Valley Choppers, an authorized v-twin dealer and full-service motorcycle mechanic shop, offering vintage-restoration/repair and Harley-Davidson parts & accessories. He was extremely gifted in creating “old-school, hand-built choppers” and other custom-built motorcycles.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Fawcett is survived by four children, Kimberly Ramos of Escondido, Calif., Jasmine Fawcett of Franklin County, Lacy Fawcett Fuller and a two-year-old son, Robert Fawcett, of Marion County. Other survivors include his father, James Fawcett, a retired employee of the Department of Corrections, and his mother, Lula “Lu” Palmer Fawcett, a member of the Marion County Board of Registrars, both of Haleyville. He is also survived by his sisters, Vicki Stuard, Miraloma, Calif., Anita Tudor, Ireland, Carol Dennis, Memphis, Tenn.; his grandchildren; and a host of nephews and nieces.

Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton has strived for over 100 years to uphold the rights and freedoms of all Americans, particularly citizens such as the family in this case. Now in its second century of practice, Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton is one of the oldest law firms in the South, and represents clients from all walks of life. By representing the rights of average citizens with the same level of ability and resources previously available only to large corporations, the firm remains committed to the principles set forth by founding partner, the late Mr. Francis H. Hare, Sr.

“We are appreciative of this opportunity to serve another Alabama family in their time of need,” Thompson concluded. “We at Hare, Wynn, Newell, and Newton still adhere to the words of Mr. Hare who said, ‘the law is at its finest when it protects the weak. It certainly does not exist to protect only the strong.’”